

THE
BOSTON MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

VOL. XXIX.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1843.

No. 13.

PHRENO-MAGNETISM.

[For the writer of the following article we feel that personal respect which genius, industry, and intense devotion to scientific research, should always secure to their possessor; yet, this is mingled with a regret that he should exercise his high powers upon such an unprofitable subject. Although he reasons, as we think, from imaginary data, and quotes those for authority who have more honor among strangers, than they have with those who know them best, he will be indulged with the publication of his remarks, out of regard to himself, and not on account of any respect we entertain for the doctrines he advocates.]

To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

SIR,—It has been to me a matter of some surprise that the strenuous supporters of Phrenology, who have been equally strenuous opposers of Mesmerism, should witness in silence that strange amalgamation of the two sciences, which is now being exhibited under the title of Phreno-Magnetism. It surely cannot be that the old standard, stereotyped system is in need of auxiliaries like the magnetic touches, to prop the failing belief of its disciples, or to paralyze the arms of infidels, that it condescends to an alliance so humiliating. You yourself, who have not been sparing in opprobrious epithets on magnetism and its defenders, and who profess to regard phrenology as standing on an elevation "above or hope or fear," do not seem disposed to reject with proud disdain the new order of facts that has risen to make assurance doubly sure. That watchful jealousy of phrenological honor that cries out, "*non tali auxilio*," so appropriate to your position and that of other contemners of Mesmerism, appears so hushed and silent in the present case, as to lead one to fear either some unwonted action of the Mesmeric influence, or that, after all, the science is not so independent that favors the most trifling are not gratefully received.

But if phrenologists are satisfied and willing to remain passive spectators of the coalition between their science and magnetism, it does not therefore follow that the friends of the latter should not be desirous to preserve it from contamination. If there is nobody to lay on for Tusculum, there should be somebody to lay on for Rome. And since no

one, to my knowledge, has seen fit to separate scientific truth from humbug, in the present instance, I hope I may be indulged with the privilege in the Journal, of making, in the first place, a few cursory observations on the facts and reasonings of the Phreno-Mesmerists; and, in the second, an attempt to show that the facts of magnetism are opposed to the fundamental principles of phrenology.

The great discrepancy between the Old Phrenology and the New, must, it appears to me, strike any one on a very superficial view of the statements of Phreno-Mesmerites. Indeed, if they had intended to burlesque the whole subject, they could not have hit upon a better method. The school of Gall and Spurzheim had, as they assert, by an extended analysis of individual character exhibited in every-day life, by a thorough examination of the cranial developments and mental peculiarities of the persons confined in nearly all of the prisons and insane hospitals of Europe, and, finally, by exploring the whole field of comparative anatomy, divided the brain into thirty-six compartments, and the mind into thirty-six faculties, and given to each a local habitation and a name. With this arrangement the scientific world rested satisfied for many years. No alteration, no discussion, save here and there in perhaps the meaning of a word, or a squeezing in of a particular organ which the great father had incidentally overlooked. Busts were marked out, and the boundaries of the science were fixed in stultic equilibrium. Mankind became learners. But suddenly the face of nature is changed, the ancient landmarks are swept away, and the old thirty-six are multiplied into a fluxion of some 150 or 160.

Now is it possible to suppose that these different conclusions can harmonize? Does not all the research and accumulated facts of the old school conflict with those of the new? Most certainly, if the new phrenology is true, the old is a tissue of errors, and a revolution instead of a reformation has been the result of the labors of recent investigators.

The cameleon-like hues of phreno-magnetism, as they present themselves under the glasses of different exhibitors, while they completely disprove their dependence on anything like a scientific principle, afford the clue to the discovery of the process by which this class of magnetizers impose on themselves and others. The Rev. Le Roy Sunderland, the best of authorities on this point, while he eschews the neurology of Buchanan, tells us, with regard to the workings of various other experimenters, that he notices in the first place a difference of results with different magnetizers; 2d, a sameness of results with the same magnetizers; 3d, a sameness in the same subject. Now if the results depended on the organization of the individuals, it is plain no such variation would take place. The organs, being fixed and constant in the brains of every individual, would give forth the same fixed and constant results forever, no matter whose organs were excited, or who was the excitor. But if, as we suspect, the phenomena arise through community of mental action, it is natural to suppose that a large proportion of them would present themselves in the manner stated in the first two observations; that is, they would vary according to the ideas uppermost in the mind of the

experimenter. While the sameness of results in the same subject, the fact stated in the third observation, is owing to his having been previously magnetized, and certain ideas becoming permanently associated with certain touches on particular parts of the brain.

To illustrate my meaning here, as well as to prove this position, one or two examples, which fell under my own observation, may be mentioned. Not long since, being present at one of these exhibitions, where the *overdoing of the thing* was such as to render evident the fact that each organ was polarized with reference, not to the development of a class of ideas, but to that of one particular train, I requested the privilege to place my finger on a bump, without the magnetizer or any person in communication knowing what one I might touch. The magnetizer having turned his back towards myself and the subject, I touched, as I thought, the spot over the organ of calculation. Immediately the patient began to brush the dust from his coat-sleeves with great violence. It was then mentioned to the audience that my finger was placed over the organ of calculation. The magnetizer insisted, however, that I must have touched the organ of order. And although I did not consider the brushing of dust from a coat-sleeve a functional act of the organ of order, the majority of the audience appeared to be in his favor. Soon afterwards I had an opportunity to repeat the experiment on another subject, with Spurzheim's bust before me. No sooner did my fingers come in contact with her head, than she spoke and said that she would not sing, evidently impressed with the idea that some one willed her to sing. Now as both of these persons had been repeatedly magnetized before, and by believers in phrenology, with a view to elicit phrenological facts, it is plain that particular ideas had been associated in their minds with touches on particular parts of the head. In the first case, for instance, the idea of brushing a coat was coupled in the mind of the magnetizer with the organ of order; and in the second, the idea of singing was coupled with the organ of tune—both of which organs lie near to the organ of calculation. This association accords with other facts which have been brought to light by means of magnetism. Any part of the body of a somnambulist, there is reason to believe, may be touched by a person in communication, while an idea is uppermost in his mind, to the effect of associating that idea with the actual impression ever afterwards, while the patient is in the somnambulant state. So intense is the power of association, in this remarkable state of mind, that no limits can be assigned to its action. And to it doubtless is due no small share of the pretended demonstrations of phrenology, where the direct action of the mind of the experimenter does not obviously control the results.

To one of these two causes, then, viz., either the direct sympathy between the minds of the magnetized and magnetizer, or to some previous association between impressions and ideas, may all of these phenomena be attributed. Nor is a phreno-magnetist at liberty to say, because he does not *will* a given result, it does not therefore take place by the agency of his own mind. No person can do more than imperfectly control the ideas that arise continually and spontaneously in his mind.

But a small proportion of them, only such in fact as those to which some effort of attention has been directed, are recollected. But that the wandering vagaries and the involuntary thoughts of the person in communication may be manifested in the mind of the patient, has been proved over and over again. The Rev. Mr. Townsend, in his work, has some striking examples of this kind. Among others, he mentions that his patient once quoted from a French work which he himself had lately been reading, not merely the thought, but the language, very much to his surprise.

The classification of the faculties and the location of the organs on the cranium, according to the new school, afford a double proof of their imaginary foundation. Ideas which are naturally associated on the principles of Contrast, Resemblance, Contiguity, &c., are elevated to faculties, and attributed to organs which lie close by one another on the surface of the brain. Thus we have placed, side by side, an organ of ascending and another of descending, one of swimming, another of sailing, and so on. So common are these coincidences, that they are frequently alluded to by the disciples as an interesting feature in their system. Very interesting, indeed! But not more so than the process by which the discovery of these faculties was made. No person can have witnessed or read of many of these exhibitions, without noticing how often, when the experiment *at first view seems to fail*, on re-examination it is *unexpectedly* found that the finger was not placed exactly over the centre of the organ intended to be touched, but a little to one side, in fact encroaching on some neighboring organ, as in the instance of the present writer. Twice he essayed to touch the organ of calculation, once by directing his finger over the external orbital process, and once directed by Spurzheim's bust. But his marksmanship was still called in question by the phreno-magnetizer. Let us now place this last fact by the side of the other, and try the method of proof by reversing the question. If a person places the point of his finger over a given portion of the brain of the patient while in communication with him, with expectation of producing a given result, the probability is, that he will fail in a certain percentage of instances. A large proportion of these failures will be owing to the unsteadiness of his thoughts; and again, in proportion as he loses control over his thoughts, they are apt to follow the natural principles of association. Some new thought arises in this way, and is repeated in the consciousness of the patient, even though it may be so transient and fleeting in his own mind as to escape attention. Surprised at the result, he imagines he has not touched the right spot. He examines and persuades himself that he is a little to one side, above, or below the exact point, and being convinced that the train of thought developed must have had its origin at his finger's end, he thinks he must have excited a new faculty. And his previous surprise is turned into joy at the discovery of a new organ close by the one he aimed to touch, which, perhaps, is shorn somewhat of its territory to accommodate its new neighbor. He soon communicates the discovery to some brother disciple, who, on tiptoe, fully impressed with the idea to be elicited, magnetizes another patient,

touches the spot, or near it, and this time all things accord with his previous expectations. The fame of the new bump now spreads, and, like various sorts of fame, "*acquirit vires cundo*;" or, in plain English, the more it is believed, the more the evidence accumulates. In the meanwhile, another experimenter, without hearing of these wondrous discoveries, gives off another series of impressions, which are perpetuated in the same way. At the same time those whom a roving imagination never taught to stray from the precepts of Gall, find the heads of their subjects just as they always had been, marked and approved by Spurzheim. Hence one finds but thirty-six organs; another, one hundred and fifty. Hence Neurology. Hence an organ for every disease, if a man should happen to magnetize in a fit of spleen: and if he repeat the process when convalescent, perhaps he will find an organ for every remedy.

In concluding this part of the subject, I would add that the great error of the phreno-magnetists, and the source of their other errors, consists in introducing two causes to account for that which one would account for as well. It is acknowledged by themselves that mind sympathizes with mind in the magnetic state, whether body does with body or not. It is therefore incumbent on them to prove the *impossibility* of attributing these results to mental sympathy, before they introduce the complex machinery which they are now in the habit of using. And in order to do this, experiments, conducted with much more caution than any yet recorded, are requisite.

[To be continued.]

INFLAMMATION OF LIGAMENTS, CARTILAGES AND BONES OF HIP-JOINT.

[Communicated for the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.]

In the latter part of July, the patient, a boy *æt.* 7 or 8, was poisoned with dogwood, some of which he ate. Skin of different parts of body (particularly face) was inflamed, swollen and red, like inflammation of erysipelas. After apparent recovery from this, severe pain was complained of in both hips, extending down both legs, with very extensive and diffused swelling of one leg and partial swelling of the other. Extreme sensitiveness to pressure in both hips and both legs; but most particularly where swelling was greatest. A physician was called, but was unable to decide with any certainty between poisoning, rheumatism, sciatica, neuralgia, &c. &c. Constitutional symptoms were very severe from commencement of pain. Dr. Revere, of the New York University, was passing the summer in the town, and was invited to see the patient with him. He supposed it as near neuralgia as anything else, and recommended ointments, &c. Soon after, appearances of suppuration presented over the lower part of tibia of side most swollen. On making a superficial and small opening, about a gill of healthy matter was discharged, with slight reduction of swelling, but no relief of pain. Opening healed very soon after, and swelling increased as before.

The wife, being on a visit in the neighborhood, was asked by the mother to look at the child. Pain and swelling were both excessive; constitutional symptoms very severe; pulse quick; strength much reduced. The weather was very warm. Patient was semi-recumbent on cushions placed in a chair, legs much drawn up, and excessively painful to touch or the least motion. Complained also of soreness on "sacrum and glutei." On inquiry as to this, discovered that no one had looked at the part, from supposed impossibility of turning the patient (as it gave great pain). First informing parent of extreme danger of sloughing, and preparing bed for the proper position of patient, with legs drawn up, the child was turned immediately. The appearance of the part was truly alarming. It was swollen considerably; cuticle very red and detached in several places, with purulent discharge, and a black slough, half an inch in diameter. The part was immediately bathed in warm water, and a large, soft and mild milk poultice applied. Proceeding to examine the legs, it was found that the one that had been opened was almost ready to burst with excess of swelling; that the opening had been healed for several days, but that there were strong appearances of suppuration immediately below head of tibia on outside of leg, directly above first incision. I suggested to the mother the immediate necessity of making a free opening to save the patient's life or leg, and requested her to call the physician in attendance, as soon as possible. Unable to find the physician, she requested me to do whatever I thought necessary. Thinking the affection (whatever it might prove) was "*deep-seated*," I made an incision about two inches long, directly in scar of first incision, extending it to a depth sufficient to feel the bone the whole extent of the external wound. No pure matter was discharged, but very thin blood and serum to the amount of six or eight ounces in as many hours. The bone did not appear to be in a sloughy state at the seat of incision, but the free incision seemed to relieve the extreme tension and swelling, for in less than twenty-four hours the swelling had evidently abated, and all appearance of suppuration disappeared, though these appearances were strongest immediately below knee. Dr. Stimpson, of Dedham, was called by the attending physician (who saw the patient six hours subsequent to my opening and relieving the swelling). Dr. S. saw patient twelve hours after incision, and was somewhat excited and alarmed at the sight of the integuments of the back; and after his usual careful examination of all the facts, was inclined to the belief that there was inflammation in some part of the ligaments, bone, periosteum or articular cartilages; with suppuration and ulceration, apparently in one or both hip-joints, or in their neighborhood. He recommended the usual constitutional remedies, and a poultice to the whole limb, with directions to keep the incision as free as possible.

I am aware that incisions are often made after escape of pus from cavity of joint; but it seems that a free incision (prior to suppuration so extensive as to rupture the cavity of the joint, or prior to the suppurative stage of inflammation), extending through the periosteum or even into the cavity of the joint, would greatly relieve, if not entirely remove the

inflammation. We see the good effects of this treatment in osteal paronychia, frequently preventing sloughing of the bone and immediately arresting a dangerous swelling. Will the analogy hold in this case? I think it must. It certainly is worthy of consideration. Our remedies frequently "scotch the disease, but seldom kill it," for they act (if at all) only *indirectly*. Though the swelling immediately below the knee had no direct communication with the part incised, yet all appearances of suppuration soon disappeared, and reason and analogy show it to have been proper treatment; though some deny it. The immense swelling, pain, and constitutional symptoms, in such cases, arise more from the confinement of the inflammation or pus, than from the nature or seat of disease. This patient was first seen by me on Tuesday morning, and had been seen by the attending physician on Sunday morning before. The child then complained of soreness over sacrum and nates, but for some reason or other they were not examined, though the parents were made aware of the necessity of extreme caution in such cases. The position of the patient had not been changed from the commencement of the severity of the symptoms, except from lying on back, to sitting reclining backwards, on account of believing any other posture impossible.

The patient seemed for a fortnight to be a little relieved; fever, swelling and pain abating, and appetite returning. The slough on the back, before mentioned, had not yet separated, when symptoms took a decidedly unfavorable turn. Hectic increased, appetite and strength failed, the yet unhealed ulcerations of back assumed a slightly livid appearance, an appearance of inflammation appeared over tuberosity of ischium, with considerable swelling, a slough formed of the diameter of a quarter of a dollar, and a large and diffused swelling formed immediately below the trochanter of opposite side, the contents of which appeared, through the skin, to be a fluid of a dark color, with considerable appearance of redness of integuments. There was also some discharge of blood from the bowels. The constant change of position and regular discharges of bowels had not been attended to with the strictness absolutely necessary in patients afflicted as this one was; and I thought the strength, or rather the last efforts of nature, would succumb in course of ten or twelve hours, to the severity of the symptoms, some of which were necessary, and others accidental. Nature, however, finally prevailed, and in the course of twenty-four hours the patient's strength seemed to rally, the swelling below the trochanter gradually diminished in size and grew hard, and the appetite improved. For the last three or four days the pain appeared to have subsided altogether, even the soreness of integuments, and there was great tendency to œdema, following the laws of gravity. These unfavorable symptoms, however, have now disappeared. The first slough was cut off about a week since; the second is loose, but of considerable depth, with ulceration around it of tolerably healthy appearance. Nates of left side now showed the characteristic appearance of suppuration of joints, and Dr. Stimpson, who now saw the patient again, was quite positive that this affection must have been the origin of the symptoms.

On careful inquiry, it was found that the child had pain, lameness and enlargement of glands of groin, prior to the poisoning. Patient seems now tolerably comfortable, but disease in the hip seems going through the usual routine, as it is quite tender, &c. &c.; though the limb does not appear yet to be shortened or lengthened, and no outlet for pus is yet formed.

I should be happy to apprise you of the result of the case, should you desire it.

T. K. THOMAS, JR., M.D.

Canton, Ms., Sept. 25th, 1843.

THE GROWTH OF THE BEARD MEDICALLY CONSIDERED.

To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

SIR,—Deeming the subject of the human hair of no inconsiderable importance in a medical point of view, and being fully of the opinion that much may be done towards the preservation of health by a clear understanding of the nature and uses of this appendage, we take the liberty of submitting to the profession the following ideas in relation to the subject.

It has been well remarked by physiologists, that "*Nature in her works is never superfluous.*" Our Creator, when he made man, formed him in his own image, *perfect*. Not only was the body fashioned comely and symmetrical in its proportions, but every part, every appendage, was given him for some wise and useful purpose. We therefore assert that the practice of *shaving the beard*, and thus depriving the face, throat and chest of that efficient protection which nature has provided, is one of those pernicious customs which an imperious and blind *fashion* has introduced, and which has conducted materially to the production of the numerous diseases of the respiratory organs with which mankind are afflicted.

In order to substantiate this position, it is necessary to inquire whether those who wear the beard long, are as prone to affections of the throat and breast as those who are shaven.

By recurring to the customs of the ancients, both previous and for a long period subsequent to the time of our Saviour, it will be seen that it was customary to wear the hair and beard long. We also learn from the best authorities, that diseases of the throat and chest, as well as scrofula and analogous complaints, were of very rare occurrence among them. Indeed, we believe it to be a fact which cannot be controverted, that with those nations where the hair and beard are worn long, the people are more hardy and robust and much less subject to diseases, particularly of a pulmonary character, than those who shave. The Turk, the Russ, the Greenlander, the Persian, &c., have been nearly exempt from bronchial and lung complaints, in comparison with the European and American. Nor can this be attributed to any climatic influence, for no people are more exposed to atmospheric changes than the inhabitants of those northern regions.

The fashion of shaving the beard, like many other foolish and injurious customs of civilized life, has often originated from absurd and ridiculous causes. Among the first who practised shaving the beard, were the soldiers of Alexander the Great, who were commanded to remove their beards in order that they might not serve as handles to their enemies in battle! When Louis XIII. ascended the throne of France, in 1656, it was the custom of the inhabitants to allow their faces to remain as their Creator made them. This monarch, however, was a *beardless* youth, and thus, in order to ape royalty, was *shaving* introduced and beards proscribed. In Spain, also, was the fashion introduced in a similar manner. Philip V. was a *beardless boy*, and therefore, for fashion's sake, did his subjects, hitherto noble and manly in appearance, reduce themselves to this unnatural and childish state.

The hair being a bad conductor of caloric, is admirably calculated to retain the heat of those parts which it covers, and to protect the important organs within from the effects of cold and the constant atmospheric vicissitudes to which man must be exposed. The importance of this protective agent will be appreciated when it is borne in mind how many inflammatory attacks are induced by the sudden application of cold, and by suppressing that function so necessary to health, the perspiration. With a long and heavy beard, a man can brave, with impunity, the "peltings of the pitiless storm," and bid defiance to the cold winds of winter, while a shaven and unguarded throat must succumb to the piercing blast.

Would the limits of a periodical permit, a great number of facts might be cited illustrative of this statement. Suffice it, however, to say, that for a number of years past, in all cases of "throat ail," bronchitis, catarrh and debility of the lungs, it has been our practice to recommend the growth of the beard as an important auxiliary in restoring the parts to their normal state. The adoption of this advice has been attended, in every instance, with decided and happy results.

The question has been often asked, why clergymen are more troubled with affections of the throat, than lawyers and other public speakers. When it is borne in mind that nearly all ministers keep themselves shaved, while, in a majority of instances, lawyers and others who are in the habit of speaking in public, permit the hair to grow under their chins, the answer will be apparent. The fact that the irritation is situated in that part of the larynx which is exposed, would seem to confirm the views we have taken.

Aside from its utility in a medical point of view, we are of opinion that a luxuriant and flowing beard adds to the grace and dignity of a man. As a smooth and soft face gives to the female that delicacy and feminine tenderness which is so appropriate to her sphere, so does the beard give to the male the manly dignity and sternness of aspect which is so well adapted to him who is to brave the tempests of a rough world. We are aware of the delicate ground on which we tread when attempting to interfere with any prevailing mode, and we expect that every weak-faced and sandy-bearded individual will endeavor to ridicule and decry

our benevolent efforts; but we shall persevere in our efforts to introduce a more close imitation, *physically* as well as *mentally*, of the wise and holy patriarchs of old. They, like good and true men, did not attempt to improve upon the workmanship of the great Architect of all, but preserved that distinctive mark between the sexes which the long and manly beard gave them.

It has been said that man is naturally subject to no diseases except those which result from old age. And who can doubt, when contemplating the many barbarous customs of society, that there is much truth in the assertion? Behold how the beautiful female figure is constantly pressed out of all natural shape and symmetry, by the use of those "infernal machines," corsets and stays! See these waspish deformities pining through their brief career, and transmitting to their offspring the feeble and imperfect organizations which such an utter perversion of nature's laws must ever inflict.

If there is propriety or reason in mutilating the body by shaving off the hair or by contracting the diameter of the chest with corsets, &c., then there is propriety in arresting the growth of the feet *a la* Chinese, and flattening the bones of the cranium after the manner of the Flat-head Indians. If we sanction the barbarous customs of our own country, let us not condemn the barbarous practices of other nations.

October 16, 1843.

MASSACHUSETTS HOMŒOPATHIC FRATERNITY.

To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

SIR,—As a matter of any importance, in itself, it would not be of consequence to notice a misstatement in your last Journal, in relation to the above-named fraternity; yet it might be unbecoming in me to allow it to pass without correction. You designate me as the President of that association. *I am not* its President. It has elected no such officer, but has been served by a Secretary only, and by a Chairman chosen at each meeting.

Please insert this in your next No. and oblige
Boston, October 24th, 1843.

J. F. FLAGG.

P. S.—If you think it will be of interest to your readers, you may, if you please, add, that—

The Massachusetts Homœopathic Fraternity held its first meeting, about four years ago, with only four members. Less than three years since, its constitution was adopted by seven signers. These have increased to sixteen or seventeen, and others have been elected, bringing its present number to about twenty or more—all members of the Massachusetts Medical Society—none being admitted who are not either Fellows of that Society, or eligible thereto.

The Fraternity hold their meetings monthly, for the sole purpose of mutual improvement in the science and practice of homœopathy. They have evinced no desire for notoriety, not even to proclaim their existence

as an association. (This you have now done for them.) They were united under the convictions obtained by some experience, that homœopathy was a subject deserving their most serious attention, and demanding their candid examination; and it is not known that a single member has seen cause to change his opinion, or relinquish the pursuit of his studies and practice in the new system.

They depend on homœopathy, most of them *entirely*, others *mainly* and so far as their knowledge and experience in it will warrant, for their own persons and families when medical treatment is required; and this in cases mild or severe, acute or chronic, and with highly satisfactory results.

In the pursuit of homœopathy, however, they fully and emphatically disclaim all fellowship or sympathy with those who are endeavoring to introduce or extend it by the tricks and arts of irregular practitioners or reckless impostors; and *particularly* such as have been, for the last year or more, advertising and puffing themselves in the newspapers, as "*Homœopathic Physicians*," offering for sale "homœopathic specifics" for all manner of diseases, and striving to impose on the uninformed and credulous, for homœopathy, that which is entirely adverse to its principles and practice.

J. F. F.

A SOUTHERN WINTER'S RESIDENCE FOR INVALIDS.

[THE following letter, addressed by Mr. M. C. Heald, of Georgia, to Dr. North, of Saratoga Springs, contains information so explicit, and, on the whole, so favorable, that we take the earliest opportunity, in compliance with the suggestions and permission of Dr. N., to lay it before the readers of the Journal for the benefit of such of their employers and friends as are contemplating a flight to the South for the winter. South Newport is said to be about eighteen miles north of Darien, on the stage road to Savannah.]

DR. M. L. NORTH.—DEAR SIR,—Your favor of Sept. 20th came safely to hand, somewhat retarded by a temporary derangement of the mail.

Dr. Sylvester was right in saying to you that I am a northerner and a temperance man; also a member of the Presbyterian church.

I shall be willing to take boarders for the winter or by the year if they can put up with many privations which could be readily prevented in a northern market. Our mode of living is quite different from the northern; but in case any one requested, I can order supplies from Boston or New York, but it would make an extra expense. I have concluded, upon deliberation, that I cannot board, furnishing lights, fuel, doing washing, &c., for less than \$2.50 per week, which is as low for this season as \$2 was for the last. However, in case I could get from ten to fifteen boarders, I would board for less, say \$2 or \$2.25. My place is six miles from the Presbyterian church, but within forty rods of the Baptist church, that has preaching half the time by an excellent man, educated at the North, who seldom meddles with sectarian principles.

Persons spending the season here will have the post office in the same house, as I am the post-master. I also keep a small store, am near a river, have a fine sail-boat that can carry about twenty persons, and we often take a trip to the sea islands to hunt, &c. We have plenty of deer and a fine chance for sport.

Vessels make the voyage from New York to Savannah or Darien in from four to six days, and charge from \$15 to \$25. Stage fare from Savannah to this place, \$4. From Darien, \$2. Runs every day in the winter, Sundays excepted.

We have a very mild climate. I have not seen an ounce of snow in this place in six years. We have very little sickness in the winter season, and physicians are scattered.

Strangers are generally well pleased with this place, which I am inclined to think is as pleasant as any in Georgia. We have very good water, have plenty of fish and oysters; can sail to the oyster banks, take in a supply and return with the flood tide. In the Spring we can catch fish weighing from 50 to 100 pounds, in the river below me, which is fine sport. There is plenty to divert one in the vicinity, and strangers are generally well pleased with the people about us.

In case you come yourself, or send any boarders out to this place, I should be pleased to know it a few days previously. If I could be sure of twenty or thirty boarders next year, I would make all necessary arrangements for them, and could board for \$2 a week.

You may rest assured that all shall be done, for the comfort of boarders, that lies in my power. I am, very respectfully, your ob't servant,
South Newport, Ga., Oct. 7, 1843. M. C. HEALD.

ON SEMINAL DISCHARGES FROM THE URETHRA.

By James Douglas, M.D., Glasgow.

SINCE reading the papers in the Gazette by Mr. Phillips*, on involuntary discharges of spermatic fluid, I have always intended to send a note of my small experience on this subject, but have delayed rather too long for it to come into close enough relation with his. The readers of the Gazette will probably remember, however, that after describing the causes and the debilitating effects of these discharges, Mr. Phillips explained M. Lallemand's plan of treatment, by cauterizing the prostatic portion of the urethra with the nitrate of silver, and gave an account of the cases in which he himself had put it in practice.

In October, 1837, I read a paper on spermatorrhœa before the Glasgow Medical Society, in which I gave an account of Professor Lallemand's opinions on this subject, and the history of a case which had occurred to myself. The patient was a medical man, and he was so impressed with the truth of M. Lallemand's doctrine, with which I had made him acquainted, that he formed the resolution of visiting Mont-

* See this Journal, Vol. XXVIII., pages 35, 89, 413.

pellier, and being operated on by the Professor himself. This was accordingly done; but he did not remain sufficiently long under M. L.'s care to see that there should be no need for a repetition of the application. He was, however, greatly benefited, the discharges having become much more rare. Some months after he desired me to cauterize the prostatic urethra for him again, which I did very freely, and a renewed improvement was the result, although the discharges have never entirely ceased.

Last year a case occurred to me, which I treated with a different local application. As it appeared to me that the effect of the caustic on the urethra must be very much the same which its solution has on the conjunctiva, diminishing its sensibility or irritability, I thought that perhaps a solution of opium might serve the purpose as well, or perhaps better, attempting at the same time to give tone to the parts by the use of general means.

R. M'G., æt. 25. Nov. 20th, 1842. About six years ago fell into the practice of masturbation; at that time having never touched a woman. For about twelve months was much given to that bad practice, and ever since has continued it occasionally. About seven months after first commencing masturbation had sexual connection, and but seldom since.

Five or six months ago he complained to me of frequent slight headache, and giddiness in looking down, which he attributed to derangement of the stomach, and treated as such, with but partial success.

In August last he first noticed that he lost semen at night during sleep; not thrown out in the way of ejaculation, but running from him gradually, and without any pleasurable sensation; also without any lascivious dreams, and with scarcely any erection. About the same time he noticed the semen to be parted with when at stool, and frequently also when making water.

In the beginning of October he told me of this complaint. I inquired whether he had given up the bad practice which occasioned it, and he pled guilty to still polluting himself with it sometimes. I made him promise to give it up entirely, and this promise he has faithfully kept. I then put him on an ounce of steel (*tr. mur. ferri*), and ordered the shower-bath, cold, every morning. By the end of October he said that he felt his general health improved, but that the emissions still continued. I then ordered a mixture of mucilage with watery solution of opium, one grain of opium and three grains of acetate of lead to the ounce of the mixture, to be injected into the back part of the urethra, and even into the bladder. In ten days I doubled the strength of the opium. This was used three times a day. When the injection was first allowed to pass back, it produced a sensation of heat, and afterwards a pleasing soothing feeling. It has now been used for three weeks, and the improvement is very marked. He has now no nocturnal emissions, and very rarely when at stool, and these only to a very small extent.

I recommended him at this date to change the muriate of iron for the carbonate, and to continue the shower-bath and the injection.

Dec. 6th.—Has improved very much in his general appearance. Uses the injection now only before going to bed. Has had no nocturnal emis-

sions since former date (Nov. 20th), and very few when at stool, and none at all with his urine. I advised him to continue.

This summer I had occasion to see him on account of dysentery, and learned that he was almost entirely free of his annoyance, the only remedy which he still uses being the shower-bath.

Should this treatment, by injecting the solution of sugar of lead with opium, mixed with mucilage, be found generally serviceable, it will have the advantage of not requiring the confinement which is necessary for some days after the application of the nitrate of silver.—*London Medical Gazette.*

THE BOSTON MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

BOSTON, NOVEMBER 1, 1843.

Sulphur-fume Baths.—In Italy there is a volcanic district called Solfatara, containing a natural apparatus or laboratory for generating sulphurous vapor, the therapeutic properties of which, it is said, have been known to the vicinal population for ages. This gas is continually poured forth through fissures in the earth, and over these the inhabitants build small huts, in which they expose their naked bodies to the action of the vapor for the cure of various diseases.—[Vid. Phil. Journal of Med. and Physical Sciences, Vol. III., page 126.]

To Dr. Galés, of Paris, more than to any other medical man, is due the credit of making the first scientific application of sulphur fumigation, combined with artificial heat, in the treatment of various intractable complaints. In 1816 he published, by order of the French government, his *Memoirs and Reports* on the efficacy of sulphurous fumigations, in the treatment of diseases of the skin, joints and glandular system, chronic rheumatism, paralytic affections, &c. The subjoined extract is from a report of the "Faculty of Physic of Paris," made in 1815, touching the merits of the remedy in question, and may not be without its use to the medical profession on this side the Atlantic.

"The Faculty named a Committee, which has pursued their experiments on these methods and compared them with other remedies. The fumigations which Dr. Galés first brought into use, to heal diseases of the skin and other chronic maladies, is a remedy which, in many instances, has been attended with more efficacy than others which have usually been employed up to the present time—such as the juices and apozems to which we give the name of depuratives, the internal and external use of mercury, the various preparations of antimony and sulphur, internally or externally, &c. &c.

"This new method, moreover, presents two important points in the practice of physic as it respects *herpetic affections*; for *hereditary diseases have been cured by it, even those hereditary strabismic complaints which had existed from earliest infancy, and seemed to be incurable from the long continuance of the disease and its adherence to the economy of the patient's constitution.* Some of these patients had been treated by a great

number of remedies, had despaired of recovery, yet were radically cured by this method.

"This remedy, which appears to convey an exciting effect to the lymphatic and absorbent systems, has been employed to counteract such affections as seem to depend on a want of tone in the system—as scrofulous and certain other swellings. This remedy has also been employed in gout, rheumatism, palsy, and many other diseases, and often with the greatest success. By this method *rheumatic affections* are readily cured; more especially as in gout, when the disease has been of a chronic nature.

"In stating the results of our observations, as well as from the avowal of Dr. Galés, we fear not to assert the inefficacy of the fumigation in some cases; but the constancy of the effects which we have experienced from it in curing diseases of the skin, and the advantages which have been derived from the practice in the treatment of other diseases—advantages which time and new experiments may yet extend—all conjoin to dispose us in favor of the remedy. We ought, however, to observe, that if the success attending its use has not always been the same, its application has never been attended with any prejudicial consequences; and we merely state these circumstances resulting from its immediate effects, that every practitioner may be enabled to form a true judgment of them."

The report from which the above extracts are taken was signed by Leroux, Dubois, Dupuytren, Richerand, &c. After receiving the approbation of such eminent men, the fumigating baths immediately enjoyed the confidence and extensive patronage of all the leading members of the medical faculty of Paris, and have been in active operation in the principal hospitals of that city for more than twenty years. The annual number administered at some of these establishments is very great. At the Hospital of St. Louis alone, the number is more than 180,000, besides those given at the Hotel Dieu, Maison Royale de Santé, &c. Dr. Green states that of sixty-two patients whom he saw present themselves to the Baron Alibert one morning for advice, only seven were prescribed for exclusive of these baths as a part of the treatment. For many years Dr. Green has been connected with a hospital in London, where the heated air and fumigating bath has constituted an important item in the cure of numerous maladies. He states that the success attending the practice, the satisfaction given to medical men whose patients have been subjected to the remedy, and the generally happy results to the patients themselves, equally contribute to encourage their use and extend their advantages.

The sulphur baths are usually esteemed a great luxury by those who take them. The patient enters the apparatus with the thermometer at about 100 deg. As soon as everything is arranged for his convenience and safety (which requires but a moment's time) the sulphur, previously deprived of its acid properties, is evaporated as rapidly as possible without producing a flame. The temperature is raised gradually to any point desired, and the effects produced upon the circulation, the skin and respiratory organs, as well as the general sensations, are carefully watched. The feet are always kept the hottest. The face is not included within the apparatus, and the individual inhales as pure an atmosphere as though he were sitting in a parlor, and is totally unconscious that his whole person, except the head and face, is enveloped in a dense cloud of dry, medicated vapor. In six or eight minutes the arterial pulsations become ac-

celerated, full and vigorous, but always soft; an animated blush is diffused upon the countenance, and the whole surface of the body and limbs is covered with moisture, as if the individual had been engaged in some powerful athletic exercise. The amount of perspiration can be regulated at the will of the person in attendance, and may be more or less copious as the nature of the disease and the condition of the patient may indicate. While he is thus situated, with the circulation quickened and the cutaneous pores expanded and excited to increased activity by the high temperature of the rarefied atmosphere surrounding him, he is in the most favorable circumstances possible for the absorption of sulphur in its minutest division; and whoever reflects upon the manner in which the circulation and all the other vital phenomena are performed, will perceive that this method of treatment commends itself for its simplicity, safety and efficacy in cutaneous diseases, chronic rheumatism, neuralgic affections, glandular engorgements, &c.

The fumes of sulphur in combination with the exalted temperature of the bathing apparatus—say at 110 or 120 degrees—usually produce a very sensible stimulating effect upon the dermoid texture when in a diseased condition. This is by no means an unwelcome influence; because, if allowed to attain only a moderate degree, it almost uniformly ends in a favorable modification of the habits of the cutaneous vessels. On the other hand, the temporary exposure of the surface of the body to the remedy in question at a low temperature—say at 80 or 90 degrees—would probably exert little or no power in the amelioration or cure of disease. We might as well use the small dust of the balance.

The baths exert a benign action upon persons of a thin, nervous or phlegmatic habit; also upon those of a scrofulous diathesis with languid circulation, cold extremities, and the skin in an inert, unperspirable condition, as well as upon those who possess but a moderate or feeble muscular power, with the general sensibilities and functions of the system prone to an atonic state. Under such circumstances the beneficial results of the fumigations, judiciously administered, in the diseases already named, may be relied upon in the majority of cases with little fear of ultimate disappointment. To produce their full and best effects upon the system, they require a nice tact on the part of the individual who superintends them, a correct knowledge of the circumstances under which they should be given, judgment as to the duration and temperature of each bath, and ability to detect with precision any peculiar operation that may be displayed upon the cerebral, pulmonary or cutaneous organs; and like all other remedial appliances, should be saved from the hands of quackery and ignorance with as much care as we would rescue pearls from the trappings of swine.

An idea is prevalent, we believe, in the minds of some, both in the medical profession and out of it, that a succession of the sulphur baths produces constitutional debility. We have good authority for saying that this is not true unless they are given in a rude empirical manner, as they often have been in this country, by persons ignorant of their *modus operandi*—who know nothing of the maladies to which they are adapted, or of the pathological condition of the patient at the time, and who of course are guided by a blind indiscrimination in regard to many important particulars which none but a physician would think of or understand. The immediate sensations experienced by those who take them are almost

always those of increased vigor and elasticity of body and cheerfulness of mind. The more lasting impressions upon the system generally, are those of a tonic. Of this fact there is no doubt. The appetite is sharpened, the stomach and all the digestive organs are rendered more energetic and successful in the execution of their various labors upon "the plastic elements of nutrition," and the patient is quite certain to gain flesh unless measures are taken to avert such an occurrence. Nearly two thousand of these baths have been administered within the last two years at Dr. Durkee's private hospital in this city. He informs us that it is his practice to ascertain the weight of the patient at the time of commencing and completing a series of the baths, and the result in regard to the increase of weight, in fifteen cases out of twenty, is as we have just stated, which affords ample demonstration of their prophylactic nature. If taken but a few times they produce a peeling of the diseased as well as the healthy integuments, so that the patient soon finds himself clad in an entire new skin. This process of cuticular exfoliation is repeated with greater or less frequency, and is more or less perfect according to the number of baths, and the manner in which they are given. Usually the cuticle is cast off at about the eighth repetition.

So many different phases, and so many degrees of virulence and obstinacy, and so much capriciousness, appertain to almost every variety of cutaneous complaints, and so many idiosyncrasies are to be encountered and accommodated in the course of treatment, that in regard to the number of fumigations necessary for the cure of different cases belonging even to the same group or family, no very definite calculation can be formed; but in most instances a decided amendment is perceptible after the first exfoliation of the cuticle has taken place.

The baths may be taken at all times and seasons without risk of "taking cold;" and the reason is this: the ceremony itself induces a state of great activity in the general circulation—especially is this the fact with the capillary vessels of the skin, which condition fortifies the individual against any supposed danger arising from subsequent exposure in the open air.

*A Treatise on Diet.**—From the author, Wm. Davidson, M.D., of London, we have been favored with a highly finished duodecimo volume, with the title given below. No claim appears to be made to originality; ideas, opinions, facts and suggestions have been selected from reputable sources wherever they could be found; and by being classified and interwoven with the clear and judicious observations of Dr. Davidson, possess an increased value. It is really pleasant to look into a book of this kind, and find it free from that tissue of nonsense which characterizes the school of starvationists, who have had an ephemeral existence in this country, but who are now only remembered to be laughed at for their absurdities, or pitied for their obstinacy in warring against nature and the special yearnings of their own stomachs.

From an examination of the pages, thus far, it apparently does not pretend to take the high scientific ground assumed in Dr. Pereira's pro-

* *A Treatise on Diet*, comprising the Natural History, Properties, Composition, Adulteration and Uses of the Vegetables, Animals, Fishes, &c. used as Food. By William Davidson, M.D., &c. &c. London: John Churchill. 1843. 12mo. p. 363.

duction on Food and Diet, which has but lately come from the American press. Nevertheless, it is scientific in character, and appropriate for the object for which it was evidently intended, viz. popular reading. A dyspeptic may guide himself in safety through the market with this prudent monitor in hand; and the book will also advise an invalid in regard to the character of the food which, under all circumstances, is most harmless, or appropriate. We consider the work, on the whole, a safe and edifying companion for all sorts of reflecting people, rather than a rule of practice for practitioners of medicine, who, in the daily circuit of professional business, store up very nearly the same general knowledge upon the subject of the effects of different kinds of diet.

In the first part, expressly devoted to dietetics, is embraced the consideration of digestion, indigestion, alimentary principles of the various kinds of food; diet of man during the various periods of life; times of eating; idurnal quantity of food required by an adult; diet during disease; drinks, condiments and cookery.

Were it re-printed in this country, we have an impression that an edition would go off with rapidity. The plain, honest statements with which the book is replete, together with the important dietetic rules and information to be derived from it, would certainly influence those who are so fortunate as to enjoy its perusal.

Extirpation of a Dropsical Ovary.—One of the last operations of this character was performed by Dr. F. Bird, of the Metropolitan Free Hospital, London. In this case paracentesis had been previously performed ten times. He made an incision a little below the umbilicus, on the right side, and having discharged the tumor of its contents, it was withdrawn to the outside of the abdomen, and separated, with a large part of the Fallopian tube. The solid part of the tumor was a little larger than an orange, but when filled, says the report, would contain about two gallons of fluid, and weigh rising of twenty pounds.

Dr. Sewall, of Washington, D. C., on his late tour in Europe, witnessed the success of this triumph of modern surgery, and expresses himself delighted with the important information he gathered on this one point. When he has had leisure for arranging the notes he may have collected, and classified his observations upon the scientific men of the great and justly-renowned medical institutions of the old world, the profession may be gratified with an occasional paper from him. At all events, his friends will hardly be willing to excuse him from the labor.

Vanilla Infusion.—In Germany, that country where, of all others, new things in medicine are developed, a certain Dr. Herschmann prescribes an infusion of vanilla against adynamic fever and hysteria. It is prepared by pouring from three to four ounces of boiling water to one drachm—to be digested in a close vessel and sweetened. A dose is about this quantity in twenty-four hours—taken from time to time.

In New England this vanilla is used extensively for flavoring ice creams. The practice of prescribing it in debility, of typhus, for example, is entitled to no more praise than that of giving a glass of tamarind water under the same circumstances. It may be something more of a mild stimulant, and that is all.

Copland's Medical Dictionary.—Inquiries are frequently made at this office respecting the unfinished portion of this Dictionary, the re-publication of which, it is well known, was commenced in this city seven or eight years since. One reason, and a pretty important one, why the work has not been completed here, is, that it is still unfinished in London. The Boston publishing house, however, which undertook it, has long since failed, and the stereotyped plates of the published volumes it was understood were bought by Gen. Duff Green, of Washington, but who has, we believe, done nothing towards issuing the Parts which have since been published in London. We noticed, some time since, that Lea & Blanchard, of Philadelphia, proposed publishing the work; but whether they intend a continuation of the American Parts already published, or an entire new edition, we have not been informed. We have little doubt that so valuable a work will be re-printed here soon after its completion in England; but that those who paid for it in advance will have any claim upon a new set of publishers, is not very probable. The unaccountable delay of the author in preparing the matter has prevented, and probably still prevents, American publishers from taking hold of it.

Medical Miscellany.—Assistant Surgeon T. M. Potter, U. S. N., is ordered to Frigate Raritan.—Animal magnetism, under the name of *pathetism*, which takes off the wire edge of the old farce, seems to be reviving again in Providence, under the potent agency of the Rev. Mr. Sunderland, of New York. Where is Miss Brackett, the former wonder of *clairvoyant* believers?—In gratitude for the services of Dr. S. Ferrier, Surgeon of the Ship Thunderer, three companies of soldiers had contributed funds to present him with a superb gold snuff-box.—Dr. Bridgeman is much respected in China. Dr. Peter Parker seems not to be doing so much surgery there, as formerly.—There seems to have been a severe mortality in King George's Co., Virginia—the disease not being mentioned.—Dr. Hulse, Dr. Picket, Dr. Todd, Dr. Williams and Dr. Andrews, are reported to be very sick with the yellow fever at Rodney, Miss.—Dr. Rawson, an Alderman in New York, is a candidate for coroner.—The old Medical Society of London intend to publish their transactions. The last of its memoirs given to the public was in the latter part of the last century.—*Origin, Symptoms, Treatment, Diagnosis and Consequences of scarlet fever*, was the Fothergillian subject for a medal in March, 1841. For 1845 it is to be the origin, nature and treatment of lepra psoriasis.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.—Review No. 2 of Drs. Curtis & Lillie's *Epitome of Homœopathic Practice*, has been received from the writer of the review published in this Journal in July last.

DIED.—In Shrewsbury, Mass., Dr. Azor R. Phelps, '46.—In Charleston, S. C., Dr. Benjamin Waterhouse, Jr., formerly of Cambridge, Mass.—At Rodney, Dr. J. H. Savage. In Copenhagen, Denmark, Dr. Jacobson, 61, principal physician to the King and Queen.

Number of deaths in Boston, for the week ending Oct. 28, 46.—Males, 22—Females, 18.

Of consumption, 5—infantile, 3—sudden, 1—lung fever, 5—old age, 2—typhus fever, 2—disease of the heart, 2—canker, 2—bilious fever, 1—hooping cough, 1—measles, 2—drowned, 1—dropsy in the head, 1—influenza, 1—accidental, 1—marasmus, 1—inflammation of the bowels, 2—brain fever, 1—dropsy on the brain, 1—neuralgia, 1—liver complaint, 1—unknown, 1.

Under 5 years, 17—between 5 and 20 years, 6—between 20 and 60 years, 13—over 60 years, 4.

Theory of Animal Heat. By J. M. WINN, M.D., Truro, England.—About three years since, whilst making a few experiments with caoutchouc, I was forcibly struck with the property it possesses of evolving heat when suddenly stretched, and was led at the time to infer the probability of other bodies being similarly endowed. The elastic coat of arteries especially, from the mechanical resemblance it bears to caoutchouc, appeared to be one of the substances most likely to exhibit this calefactory principle; and in the event of this being the case, it would not be unreasonable to conclude that the incessant contractions and dilatations of the arteries during life must form an efficient source of animal heat.

During the past week I was induced to resume the subject afresh, and upon making an experiment with part of the aorta of a bullock, I felt much gratification in being able to verify my previous conjecture. The experiment was performed in the following manner:—Having cut off a circular portion of the descending arch of the aorta, about an inch in length, I laid it open and carefully dissected out the elastic coat, and taking hold of it by each extremity, I pulled it to and fro with a continuous jerking motion (in imitation of the systole and diastole of the artery), for the space of about a minute, when, placing it on the bulb of a thermometer, I had the satisfaction to find that after it had remained two minutes the mercury had risen as many degrees. On removing the thermometer the heat immediately began to diminish. To be certain that the heat did not arise from any other source than the one in question, I took the precaution of covering my fingers with a double layer of flannel to prevent the communication of heat from the body; I also covered my mouth with a handkerchief to guard against the warm breath affecting the thermometer whilst watching the progress of the experiment. I may likewise state that the experiment was performed in a room without a fire, the temperature of the air at the time being 55 deg. There were several difficulties to contend with during the investigation, and it was not until after repeated trials that the experiment succeeded to my satisfaction. The chief impediment, I think, must have been owing to the moisture of the artery, which, by its evaporation, must have had a constant tendency to carry off the heat. Having, however, performed the experiment twice consecutively in the same satisfactory manner, I think there can be but little doubt entertained as to its conclusiveness. My attention was often arrested, whilst conducting the experiments, by the striking mechanical analogies between caoutchouc and the elastic coat of the arteries. Like the former, the latter could be elongated to twice its ordinary length, and on withdrawing the tension would return to its usual dimensions with considerable force and a snapping noise. I was also surprised to find, on slightly drying it, that it would erase black-lead pencil marks from paper without leaving a stain. This latter circumstance is perhaps of trifling importance; it serves, however, to show that strong mechanical resemblance may exist between bodies widely differing in their chemical properties.—*Philosophical Magazine.*

Action of Belladonna and Hyoscyamus on the Eyes.—A grain of the extract of either of these plants is sufficient to obtain a well-marked dilatation of the pupil, but a fifth or a tenth of a grain of atropine will produce the same effects. A very prompt and durable dilatation may be obtained by the endermic method, by applying these narcotics to the most vascular parts near the eyes.—*Lon. Med. Times.*